Writing Expectations and Guidelines

This is a college level course that requires college level reading and writing. Your submitted assignments are a reflection of you, your attention to detail, and your overall level of commitment to your college work. Following, are some expectations and guidelines that will help you achieve a good grade in this course. These apply to all written work in this class including assignments, discussion postings, journals, etc.

A. Make sure that your name, the course name, and assignment name are included in your submitted work - the top left corner is good.

B. Use the spell-check tools that are available with your word processing program and the text boxes (discussions, assignments, journals, etc.) that are in Moodle. If you use Microsoft Word, use the grammar-checking tool. It is a good learning tool that can help with your current and future writing.

C. Always carefully and slowly proofread your work. When possible, do your written work a day early, put it aside, and then come back to it the following day and carefully read through it again for clarity and content. Spelling and grammar check routines may not catch all of your errors. Common mistakes that may not be caught include the misuse of the following words:
   a. there, their, and they’re
   b. to, two, and too
   c. four, for, and fore
   d. our and are
   e. were, where, and we’re
   f. your and you’re
   g. its and it’s

Make sure that you know the differences between them and know their appropriate usage.

D. In general, it is best to avoid the use of contractions in business and academic writing. Use “you are” instead of “you’re”, “they are” instead of “they’re”, “we are” instead of “we’re”, “does not” instead of “doesn’t”, etc.

E. If your assignment requires submitted files, make sure that they are formatted cleanly and submitted in the correct file format. Your paragraphs should line up, titles should be separated, and your responses should be separated from the questions, etc. For most of our courses, Microsoft Office is the standard office software suite. Word processing documents must be in Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (rtf) format, spreadsheet documents must be in Excel (.xlsx) format, etc. If you use Pages, Numbers, OpenOffice, or some other program, you may need to “export” your documents to the correct format. Be sure to pay attention to the requested file format details. Failure to submit your
assignments in the proper file format will usually result in a score of zero (0) for the assignment. It is a good idea to double-check your submission for accuracy.

F. Use complete sentences and paragraphs when responding to questions or postings. A complete paragraph should have, at minimum, three complete sentences. Typically, that includes an introduction, a body (with a supporting example), and a conclusion. "Yes", "No", and, "I agree", are not complete responses. The questions that you respond to in your cases and assignments are generally not to be treated as oral-interview questions. You should treat them as being part of a college-level writing assignment and your responses should be written in complete paragraphs with complete sentences, and read as complete thoughts.

a. Instead of, "I agree", a more thorough posting would be:

"I agree that managing your credit card purchases is an important part of financial planning. In fact, I spend an hour every weekend going over my purchases and verifying that they have posted correctly. I find that it helps me with my overall financial management."

b. Include the original question from the assignment in your document. You may be able to cut and paste it from the assignment or you may have to type it in from your text.

c. Do not just list your answers. For example, in response to the question, “What are some of the risks associated with financial decisions?” the following response is not an acceptable answer:

Inflation and interest rate.

The college-level, complete paragraph response to the question would be something like this:

The introduction

There are several risks associated with financial decisions. Some of those risks include the uncertainty that exists with inflation or with interest rates. As the text (Kapoor, Dlabay, & Hughes, 2015) points out, the risks of inflation and changing interest rates can affect your real purchasing power. For example, if you deposit money into a savings account at an interest rate of 3% and prices rise at the rate of 5%, your purchasing power on the deposited money has not kept up with inflation. All types of risks should be evaluated and considered when making financial decisions.

The body

A supporting example

In-text citation

The conclusion

G. You must reference and quote work that is not your own. Plagiarism is not acceptable! At Cerro Coso, we use a program called, “TurnItIn.com”. The program uses a large database and the Internet to compare submitted work to other students’ work and existing
Internet sites, etc. The program returns a report that shows the matching references and the percentage of work that came directly from other sources. I submit student work there often. If your work is not your own and you submit it as such, you will receive a zero for the assignment and will be reported to the Office of the Vice President of Student Services.

a. Read the “What is Plagiarism” page from Plagiarism.org that is linked from the Course Resources area of our class homepage. It clearly defines what plagiarism is and will help you avoid it.

b. For more information on how to properly cite work from others, read this document from Plagiarism.org.

c. In this course, we will use APA style citations. For information on using APA style citations, please read this guide from Cerro Coso’s Learning Resource Center – APA Style Citation Guide.

H. An expected outcome of your college education is that you know how to communicate effectively. Among other things, this pertains to communicating with your instructor and fellow students electronically. As such, please refer to following for all forms of academic electronic communications (such as, discussion posts, emails, and instant messaging):

- Use complete sentences
- Use sentence case structure and proper punctuation
- Use fonts and formatting that are appropriate and legible
- Use appropriate and professional tone
- Proofread and use a spell check program
- Do not use texting language or "leetspeak"
- Avoid the overuse of acronyms

In addition to the above, email communication should:

- Include a proper salutation/greeting
- Include a clear, informative subject
- Include your name
- Include your course name and CRN
- Be sent via your college email account

In general, the more time and attention that you pay to your writing and formatting, the better your grade is going to be. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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